

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-9, 11-17, and 19-22 remain pending in the current Application. Claims 1, 6, 8, 11, 17, and 19-21 have been amended herein. Applicant submits that the amendments do not add new matter to the current Application. Applicant also wishes to thank the Examiner for pointing out allowable subject matter (including claims 6, 14-16, and 22).

All the amendments herein have been made in order to clarify the claims and not for prior art reasons. Applicant also submits that (1) no amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein, and (2) no amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless Applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

Rejection of claims 1-6, 8-9, 11-17, and 19-22

With respect to claim 1, Applicant submits that claim 1, as amended, is allowable over Arndt. Applicant has amended claim 1 to include the elements of dependent claim 17 which further clarify that "the interrupt prioritization level is assigned to specific storage locations of the first and second storage device, the interrupt prioritization level of the plurality of hardware-generated interrupt sources coupled to the first storage device being permanently assigned but assignment of the interrupt prioritization level of interrupt sources associated with the second storage device being variable by software control." The Examiner agrees that Arndt does not teach or suggest that the interrupt prioritization level of the hardware interrupt sources are permanently assigned; however, the Examiner, in rejecting claim 17 over Arndt in view of Donovan (US Patent 5,987,601), states that Donovan, at col. 5, lines 57-52, teaches this because Donovan discloses the major interrupt sources is assigned a fixed hardware task number. However, this hardware task number is *not* an interrupt prioritization level. The hardware task number is assigned to an interrupt source to identify the hardware task it performs. That is, it is a task number used for identification of a particular task and is not a prioritization level. Furthermore, as described in col. 6, lines 23-47, of Donovan, the task number is not the same as a priority number. The particular task to be run has an associated starting priority, where each

task (identified by its task number) feeds its priority to the priority selector 19 which picks the highest priority task and passes the task number *and* the priority to the task switch controller 20. That is, the task number identifies the task, and the priority is given in addition to the task number. Therefore, the fixed hardware task number is clearly not a permanently assigned prioritization level. Furthermore, there is no teaching or suggestion anywhere in Donovan of a permanently assigned interrupt prioritization level of hardware-generated interrupt sources, as claimed in claim 1.

The Examiner also states that one would be motivated to "incorporate Donovan's teaching into Arndt's method to have the hardware interrupt source being permanently assigned so as to limiting the number of tasks change in the system." However, Applicant respectfully disagrees with this statement. Firstly, Arndt does not address the concept of task switching. Secondly, Donovan's method does not limit the number of task changes but addresses the overhead involved with task changes. Furthermore, having hardware interrupt sources with permanently assigned interrupt prioritization levels, as claimed in claim 1, is irrelevant to the number of task changes in a system or overhead associated with these task changes. Therefore, one would also not be motivated to combine Donovan with Arndt.

For at least these reasons, Applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable over Arndt in view of Donovan. Claims 2-6 and 8 depend directly or indirectly from allowable claim 1 and are therefore allowable for at least those reasons mentioned above with respect to claim 1. (Note that Applicants have converted claim 8 to a dependent claim off of claim 1).

With respect to claim 9, which also claims "the interrupt prioritization level of the plurality of hardware-generated interrupt sources coupled to the first storage device being permanently assigned but assignment of the interrupt prioritization level of interrupt sources associated with the second storage device being variable by software control," Applicant submits that claim 9 is also allowable over Arndt in view of Donovan for at least those reasons provided above with respect to claim 1. Claims 11-13 depend directly or indirectly from claim 9 and are therefore also allowable for at least those reasons which apply to claim 9. (Note that Applicant has amended claim 11 to depend from claim 9 rather than cancelled claim 10).

Applicants has also amended claims 17 and 19-21 to depend from allowable claim 22 (as indicated by the Examiner), and therefore submit that these claims are also allowable.

Conclusion

Although Applicant may disagree with statements made by the Examiner in reference to the claims and the cited references, Applicant is not discussing all these statements in the current Office Action, yet reserves the right to address them at a later time if necessary.

Applicant respectfully solicits allowance of the pending claims. Contact me if there are any issues regarding this communication or the current Application.

If Applicant has overlooked any additional fees, or if any overpayment has been made, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to credit or debit Deposit Account 503079.

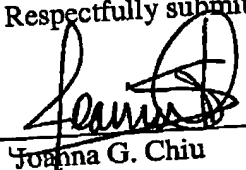
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Respectfully submitted,

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